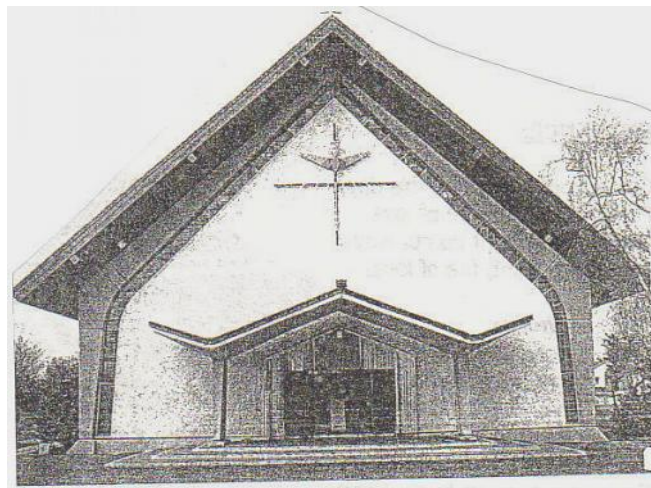


# **CHILD PROTECTION**



## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR BALLYROAN PARISH**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ballyroan Parish Child Protection Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Policy Implementation and Review</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Parish Child Protection Representative</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Code of Conduct for Children</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Code of Conduct for Adult Leaders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Selection Process for Volunteers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Practical Procedures</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Anti-Bullying</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Definitions of Abuse</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other Forms of Abusive Behaviour</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Handling a Disclosure</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Suspected Abuse</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>8</b>

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

A number of terms are used quite frequently in this policy. The following are some definitions of those terms:

**CHILD:** A person under the age of 18, excluding a person who is or has been married.

**WORKER:** Clergy, parish staff, children's and youth group leaders, organists, choir/music group leaders, including all volunteers and temporary workers - in fact all who, at times, share in the parish's ministry with children.

**PARISH:** Ballyroan Parish, Church of the Holy Spirit, Marian Road, Dublin 14.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITIES:** The Health Service Executive [Dublin Mid Leinster Health Board] which is the statutory body responsible for the safety and welfare of children, and An Garda Síochána who are empowered under legislation to investigate these matters.

**CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVE:** The role of the Child Protection Representative is to provide support to those engaged in working with children. S/he assists all workers in matters related to child protection and welfare.

## **BALLYROAN PARISH CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT**

We in the Parish of Ballyroan, in the Dublin Diocese, value and encourage the participation of children and young people in all parish activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognise the dignity and rights of all children and are committed to ensuring their protection and support.

In keeping with this we will work to do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Church.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

This policy is to be implemented by the Pastoral Council and it will be reviewed on a regular basis as determined by the Pastoral Council.

## **PARISH CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVE**

The Child Protection Representative will be a member of the Parish Pastoral Council. The Child Protection Representative at present is Mrs. Ron Charles, available at 087 2519206.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN**

1. Treat each other in a respectful manner.
2. Give good example at all times.
3. Always behave in an acceptable manner.
4. Treat your leaders with dignity and respect.
5. Know the Code of Behaviour that has been developed for your group.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ADULT LEADERS**

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being.
2. Set the standard of behaviour for the group by providing an example of appropriate behaviour in dealing with people.
3. Ensure that consent has been received by a parent/guardian before a child takes part in any activity.
4. Take care to ensure that adequate and appropriate supervision is in place for any youth activity. [Refer to the section on Practical Procedures.]
5. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the privacy of children is respected at all times.
6. Refrain from showing favouritism towards any individual and maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with children entrusted to your care.
7. Casual visits by children to the homes of volunteers and parish staff should be avoided and vice-versa unless a parent / guardian is present.
8. Avoid one-to-one situations remembering that someone else may misinterpret your actions however well intentioned.
9. Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children. Never make suggestive remarks or gestures.
10. Do not rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you.
11. Do not believe that "it could never happen to me".
12. Avoid giving lifts to unaccompanied children in your car.

## **SELECTION PROCESS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Most people who want to work with children have a lot of good to offer, however precautions should still be taken to ensure that anyone recruited to work with children is suitable for the position. The selection process adopted by Ballyroan Parish is as follows:

- Completion of a volunteer application form that includes personal details, contact information for two character references, a personal declaration of suitability and information regarding time availability. [See Appendix I]
- A meeting with members of the Pastoral Council.

## **PRACTICAL PROCEDURES**

- All leaders must undertake appropriate training as offered. Training must include Child Protection.
- The minimum adult/child ratio in any group should be two adults per group of up to eight participants. Allow an additional adult for each group of up to eight thereafter.
- Where feasible there should be adequate and gender based supervision of boys and girls.
- Parents who are present are responsible for the safety of their own children. Unaccompanied children are the responsibility of the group leaders.
- Overnight trips require careful advance planning and a proportionate number of volunteers to provide supervision.
- Leaders should never be alone in dormitories or bedrooms in which children are sleeping. If by extraordinary circumstance a volunteer considers it necessary to be in a dormitory without accompaniment, a written record of the situation should be maintained.
- It is expected that everyone play his/her part in ensuring general welfare. All should be aware of their responsibilities to prevent accidents during parish gatherings and activities.
- All should have access to the Parish Safety Statement and read the relevant sections.

## **ANTI-BULLYING**

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated: verbal, psychological or physical aggression that is conducted by an individual or group against others.

The procedure for dealing with bullying is as follows:

- Speak separately with both parties concerned to find out the facts.
- Bring both parties together to see if a solution can be found. This could be done by: asking them what they would like to see happen in the future.
- The situation should be monitored by the leaders.
- Consideration should be given to consultation with parents / guardians.

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

The main types of abuse that children may be subjected to are as follows:

### ***Neglect***

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic psychological and / or physical needs.

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

### ***Physical Abuse***

Where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate.

### ***Sexual Abuse***

When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal; or for that of others.

### ***Organised Abuse***

This occurs when one person moves into an area / institution and systematically entraps children for abusive purposes [mainly sexual] or when two or more adults conspire to similarly abuse children using inducements.

### ***Peer Abuse***

In some cases of abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child. In these situations the Child Protection Procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

## **OTHER FORMS OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

### ***Verbal Abuse***

This can include name-calling, sarcasm and criticism, making reference to some physical characteristic, destructive criticism, derogatory remarks and gestures.

### ***Unwelcome Behaviour***

This can include favouritism, exclusion, sexual harassment and sexual innuendo, humiliating and embarrassing others, deprivation of basic rights and harsh disciplinary regimes.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship, and doing so in a manner that is respectful and purposeful. Working with children and young people is based upon trusting relationships and it is not uncommon for them to want to share personal information.

In matters of child abuse, a worker should never promise to keep secret any information that is divulged.

The worker should also, as supportively as possible, explain the procedures for handling such a disclosure [see section on Handling a Disclosure]. All information regarding concern or suspicion of child abuse should be shared only with the Child Protection Representative within the parish, with the Health Service Executive or with An Garda Siochana.

## **HANDLING A DISCLOSURE**

If a child discloses a case of abuse to you the following procedure should be used:

- Stay calm. Do not panic. Listen and hear.
- Let the child know that you cannot promise to keep what has been said secret, but that you will only tell those people who need to know.
- Give the child the opportunity to say what actually occurred in his/her own words.
- Do not put words into her/his mouth.
- Ensure that the child knows that there is help available and that you will support him/her as much as possible.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure has been made, make a written report, detailing all that transpired.
- Refrain from giving your own personal views; instead use the child's own language, making sure the details given are correct. Sign and date the document.
- Contact the parish Child Protection Representative\* immediately. If the Child Protection Representative is unavailable, contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive (6486555), or An Garda Siochana (6666500) and follow their instructions.
- A full guarantee cannot be given that information received in relation to a suspicion or concern of child abuse will be kept absolutely confidential.
- Support and pastoral care will be provided for the person who receives a disclosure.

\* The Child Protection Representative is currently Mrs. Ron Charles, available at 087 2519206.

## **SUSPECTED ABUSE**

If any person has any misgivings about the safety of a child and would find it helpful to discuss their concerns with a professional, they should not hesitate to first contact the Child Protection Representative, or the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive, to discuss the matter. This should help them to decide whether or not to formally report their concerns to the Health Board. Contacting the Health Board will not automatically trigger a Child Protection investigation - the Health Board will determine whether or not the matter requires further exploration.

# Appendix I

## **Ballyroan Parish Church of the Holy Spirit, Marian Road, Dublin 14**

### **Volunteer Application Form**

*All information is confidential*

Name [Mr./Mrs./Ms.]: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other name/previously known as: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No. [Daytime]: \_\_\_\_\_ [Evening]: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline why you want to become a volunteer:

---

---

---

Please give details of your involvement with children and young people, and of any relevant training:

---

---

---

Do you suffer from any illness/disability/medical condition/s which might affect your ability to work with children and young people? If so, please give details:

---

---

---



Please indicate the times when you will be available:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Please supply the names, addresses telephone numbers and positions of two people [non-relatives] who know you well and can provide us with a Reference:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or of a bound over order? Yes / No

If yes, please state the nature and date[s] of the offence[s]

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that nothing within my personal or professional background deems me unsuitable for working with children.

I declare that the above information is true and agree that I will abide by and accept the terms and conditions of participation. (See Selection Procedure)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR PARISH USE ONLY**

Checked by: Phone / Visit / Letter

Checked by [name]: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix II

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A Child Protection Policy must give due consideration to both the rights of the child or young person and to the rights of adults, while also seeking to support both groups in their work together.

The following legislation applies to the area of Child Protection:

### ***Child Care Act (1991)***

This Act defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen, excluding someone who has been or is married.

### ***Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, (1998)***

This Act came into operation in January 1999. It states that those who report child abuse to the Health Boards or An Garda Síochána "reasonably and in good faith" are immune from civil liability. Significant protections are offered to employees who report child abuse. It is a criminal offence to deliberately make false allegations in relation to child abuse.

A further legal item of relevance here is:

### ***United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)***

This Convention is a set of minimum standards in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty, which the Irish Government has signed and which became operable in Ireland in 1992. The Convention specifies the rights that children have and, as a signatory to the Convention, Ireland is obliged to implement its contents.